

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2015 Jóvenes en Acción Funding Opportunity Number ECA-ECAPEC-15-005 Office of Citizen Exchanges Youth Programs Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) issued by the Youth Programs Division for the FY 2015 Jóvenes en Acción (Youth in Action) Program. The proposals must conform to the RFGP, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). An application not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying RFGP, the RFGP is to be the dominant reference.

This document not only provides guidance for the preparation of a proposal for the Jóvenes en Acción Program but also establishes guidelines for the implementation of the cooperative agreement.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Mexico are supporting the participation of high school youth in an intensive, substantive four-week exchange in the United States.

The exchange activities will introduce the participants to a comprehensive survey of civic education, community service, and youth leadership development. Activities will focus on building their knowledge and skill levels in these areas. The students will participate in workshops, community service activities, meetings with community leaders, and discussion groups and will have opportunities for substantive interaction with each other and their American peers.

The responsibilities of the award recipient will be the following:

1) Preparation

- a) Contact participants before the program to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to gather information about their specific interests, in collaboration with PAS. Attend the pre-departure orientation in Mexico City a few days prior to the start of the exchange.
- b) Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits plan for the duration of the exchange, and assist with claims as necessary.
- c) Hire and train staff, as needed, to accompany participants during the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all staff.

- d) Make housing arrangements. Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families to offer homestays (lodging and meals) to the participants for part of the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for each member of the host family household who are 18 years of age or older. Monitor housing arrangements to ensure the health and safety of participants.
 - e) Orient participating organizations, staff, and host families to the goals of the program and to the cultures and sensitivities of the visitors.
 - f) Arrange for adult accompaniment on the international flight, and for all domestic and international travel and ground transportation.
- 2) Exchange Activities
- a) Design, plan, and implement an intensive and substantive four-week exchange program on the stated themes. Exchange activities must promote program goals. Activities will be school and community-based, as appropriate to the project. Recruit peers from the United States to be engaged in activities with the exchange participants.
 - b) Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities.
 - c) Engage participants in approximately one community service activity each week during the exchange. The program should provide context for the participants – identifying community needs, volunteerism, charitable giving, fundraising, etc. – and a debriefing to provide context for the service activity and help participants see how to apply the experience at home.
 - d) Provide day-to-day monitoring of the participants' well-being, preventing and dealing in a timely manner with any misunderstandings or adjustment issues that may arise. Inform ECA and PAS about any significant health or safety issues that affect program participants.
 - e) Provide a welcome orientation to serve as an introduction to the program and its objectives as well as an introduction to the United States.
 - f) Provide a closing session to summarize project activities, prepare participants for their return home, and plan for the future.
- 3) Follow-on activities
- a) Provide guidance and support for participants' implementation of service projects that reinforce values and skills imparted during the exchange program to help them apply what they have learned upon returning to their schools and communities.
 - b) Present creative and effective ways to address project themes, for both program participants and their peers, as a means to amplify program impact.
 - c) Support participants in preparing blogs/presentations/articles to share their experiences once they return home.
 - d) Arrange visits by a project staff member to participate in activities organized by the U.S. Embassy and/or the in-country partner, as needed.
- 4) Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the program (See section IV.3d.3 of the RFGP).
- 5) Work in consultation with ECA and PAS in the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress to ECA and PAS, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
- 6) Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants and management of sub-award relationships with partner organizations.

The responsibilities of the Department of State (ECA and PAS Mexico City) will be the following:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
- 2) Manage the recruitment and selection of the participants, provide pre-departure briefings, and oversee follow-on activities. [This may be handled by an implementing partner selected by the U.S. Embassy.]
- 3) Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
- 4) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureau, and U.S. Embassy Mexico City.
- 5) Arrange meetings with Department of State officials in Washington, D.C. and Mexico.
- 6) Approve publicity materials and final calendar of exchange activities.
- 7) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.
- 8) Perform an annual performance evaluation/review. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds are conditions of continued administration of the program and execution of all option years.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Participant Selection: PAS (or a local implementing partner of its choosing) will recruit, screen, and select the participants. The youth participants will be high school students between the ages of 15 and 17 who have demonstrated leadership aptitude, and an interest in community service and the project themes; exhibit flexibility, maturity, integrity, good social skills, and open-mindedness; and have the motivation necessary to be active and successful exchange participants. Although participants will be proficient in English, intensive English classes during the first week of the program will help them gain confidence in their speaking ability.

Orientations: PAS (or a local organization of its choosing) will provide a pre-departure orientation for the participants, with program-specific information provided by the award recipient. The award recipient should plan to attend the pre-departure orientation in Mexico City immediately prior to the start of the exchange and accompany the group on the international flight. The award recipient will conduct a welcome orientation for the participants to introduce them to the host community and to prepare them for the activities ahead. The orientations should include a general political, historical, educational, and cultural introduction to the United States, information related specifically to the objectives and themes of the program, and practical and administrative information.

Exchange Program: The program should consist primarily of interactive activities, practical experiences, and other opportunities that provide an introduction to the civic, cultural, and educational institutions of the United States. Activities should use hand-on methods to help the participants learn about the fundamentals of civil society and community activism, build their leadership skills, and develop similar activities for their peers in their home country. The Bureau urges applicants to present innovative, resourceful, and effective programming ideas. Applicants

should justify their choices by explaining how their program plan will meet the stated goals.

The exchange will include 4-7 days in Washington, D.C., at any point in the exchange, for educational activities that focus on the U.S. political system and citizen involvement in public life. This time may also include a visit to the U.S. Department of State to provide exposure to U.S. foreign policy with Mexico. This segment and the remaining weeks in communities outside Washington, D.C. will include a variety of activities and will offer the participants exposure to the diversity of American life.

The activities could include a mix of workshops or training sessions, simulations and role-playing, teambuilding exercises, case studies, volunteer service, leadership training, meetings, classroom visits, site visits, and social time among peers. Many of these should be planned in conjunction with participation in school and community activities in a way that is educational both for the exchange participants and their hosts/peers. Intensive English language classes should be held during the first week to help students gain confidence in their speaking ability. With the exception of the intensive English classes, exchange participants should not attend classes in a school for more than a few days. All programming should include U.S. students wherever possible. Cultural and recreational activities will balance the schedule.

Examples of the kinds of program activities that may be included:

- Community service/volunteer activities
- Peer training/education workshops
- Teambuilding exercises
- Fundraising strategies
- Project/time management workshops
- Leadership development with workshop trainers or organizations
- Meetings with government, community, and business leaders
- Computer training that emphasizes research, critical thinking and analysis, and the use of the computer and Internet and social media platforms as resources and tools in education and business
- Exercises related to conflict resolution, increasing tolerance and developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
- Dialogues, simulations, role plays and other activities aimed at helping participants articulate their thoughts about the project's themes and developing presentation skills
- Visits to historical sites, government and community centers, museums and landmarks that combine learning about principals of government, history, and society with tourism
- Sports, drama, fine arts, musical and other extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for participants to work and play together

The award recipient will conduct a welcome orientation for the participants upon arrival in the United States to introduce them to the program and the community. Exchanges will end with a closing session summarizing the experience, sharing action plans for activities at home, and preparing for re-entry. The ideas and action plans to be implemented at home will come from the participants, but the project staff should be prepared to encourage, assist and direct the participants in developing these plans both during the exchange and during the follow-on period.

Sites: In addition to visiting Washington, D.C., the delegations should spend time in no more than one or two locations to allow the participants time to familiarize themselves with a community. Applicant organizations should describe the rationale for their location selections. The Bureau encourages applicants to consider proximity to sites of historical or cultural interest, access to organizations that can conduct appropriate workshops, and representation of the diversity of the host country.

Accommodations: In the United States, homestays with local families must be arranged for part of the exchange period. A dormitory, hotel, or other housing with appropriate adult supervision is an acceptable arrangement for other segments of the program, such as the welcome orientation, the closing session, or special workshops.

Applicants must present in their proposals a clear and detailed recruitment, screening, and selection process for host families. The recipient must also provide the families with an orientation prior to the arrival of their exchange participants, emphasizing the goals of the program. Screening needs to include a visit to the home to meet all members of the household to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for each member of the host family household who are 18 years of age or older. The orientation will provide families with detailed information on the exchange program, the parameters of their participation, duties and obligations, and information on cultural differences and practices.

ECA encourages diversity in the recruitment and selection of host families. They may represent diversity in family size and structure, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and geography. While exchange participants may share a room with someone of a similar age and the same gender, they must have their own bed. Participants may be placed with host families as singles or in pairs. Host families need to have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations, and adequate/meaningful time to spend with the participants.

Follow-on Activities: Provide guidance and support to participants in the U.S. by advising and supporting them in planning the implementation of community service projects, and offering opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values and skills imparted during the exchange. Exchange participants should return home from the exchange prepared to implement projects that serve a need in their schools or communities. To amplify program impact, proposals should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes, for both program participants and their peers.

Evaluation: The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 requires that federal agencies measure the results of their programs in meeting performance goals. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant's plan to measure the medium-term impact of the program. The follow-on activities will provide an opportunity to assess the impact of the exchanges on the participants, to determine how their attitudes have changed, and to evaluate the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with program themes.

Other notes: The recipient organization is responsible for all components of the program outlined in this document. In addition, the Bureau requires recipient organizations to communicate with ECA and PAS on a regular basis about program activities. The organization must also inform ECA and PAS of their progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and will be required to obtain approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation. All materials and correspondence related to the program, including publicity materials, will acknowledge this as a joint initiative between the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy Mexico City, the Mexican government, and the private sector. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and can distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible. The proposal should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items under the section headings in the GrantSolutions Application Checklist:

Online Forms

- SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, "Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs"
- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as indirect agreements, form 990, SF-LLL, etc.

Program Narrative

Executive Summary (One page)

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Identification of applicant, partner country(ies), and participating organizations
2. Identification of the Project
3. Overview of exchange participants
4. Beginning and ending dates of the exchanges
5. Proposed themes
6. Nature of activity and venues
7. Funding level requested from the Bureau, program cost, total cost-sharing

from applicant and other sources

Narrative

Within 20 double-spaced, single sided pages with one inch margins, in a size 11 or 12 font, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below. In the narrative, applicants should not only describe major program activities but also explain and justify their programmatic choices.

1. **Vision and Motivation:** Describe the project objectives and the desired outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudinal changes that the participants will acquire. Also describe the applicant's motivation for applying to conduct the project.
2. **Participating Organizations:** Identify critical partner organizations for the program, their roles, and the applicant's reasons for including them. Applicants must also describe their working relationship with the partner organization(s) and detail the division of program responsibilities between the award recipient and the partner organization(s).
3. **Project Activities:** Describe the components of the exchanges and how they related to project themes, including project planning, orientations, educational activities, cultural activities, meetings, site visits, community service, and the closing session. A detailed outline of the four-week exchange should be included as an appendix. Also, describe support for follow-up activities.
4. **Travel, Housing, and Other Logistics:** Detail how the applicant will arrange homestays and other housing arrangements; domestic travel and ground transportation; stipend disbursement; and relevant administrative matters.
5. **Participant Monitoring:** Detail how the applicant will assure the well-being, safety, and security of program participants during all stages of the program.
6. **Program Evaluation:** In the submitted proposal, applicants should include a plan describing how success in meeting the stated goals of the program will be measured and reported. ECA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique.
7. **Diversity:** Explain how the program managers will pro-actively support diversity in participant selection and program content, demonstrating how diversity can contribute to a vibrant civil society. Diversity addresses, but is not limited to, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities.
8. **Institutional Capacity and Project Management:** Outline the applicant organizations' capacity for conducting international youth exchanges, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of projects that address the goals, objectives, and themes outlined in this document; (2) age-appropriate programming for youth; and (3) previous experience working on programs in Mexico. Describe the program staffing (individuals and responsibilities), qualifications, structure, and resources. If applicable, include this information for primary partner organizations as well. Also outline the organization's capacity for increasing the number of participants to 100

participants each year should additional funding become available.

9. Work Plan/Schedule: Outline the phases of the project planning and implementation for the entire award period. Provide a draft schedule of daily activities of the exchange in an appendix.

10. Option Year: Applicants should provide a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus one additional option year, pending successful program performance and availability of funds.

Additional Information to be Submitted

Detailed Budget

Pending the availability of funds, it is anticipated that the approximate level of funding available for this program in FY-2015 (base-year of funding) is \$200,000, which will support one cooperative agreement for an exchange between the United States and Mexico. The Department reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

The available funding may be used to support the program and administrative costs necessary to implement the program as described in this solicitation. Please submit a comprehensive line item budget for each project, as stated in the Proposal Submission Instructions. An explanatory budget narrative must also be included.

Allowable costs for the program include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staff travel
- Educational materials
- Participant travel (domestic and ground transportation in the United States)
- Orientations
- Cultural and social activities
- Meeting costs
- Lodging, when not in home stays
- Food (primarily group meals when not in homestay)
- Follow-on activities
- Evaluation
- Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities

Significant cost-sharing is expected and will enhance the proposal. Stipends for homestays or for host families in the United States are not allowed as a grant-funded or cost-share item. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, the Bureau urges applicants to keep administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost-sharing contributions from the applicant and other sources.

Maximum limits on funding are as follows: Books and educational materials allowance-\$100 per participant; Conference room rental costs-\$250 per day per room; Consultant fees and honoraria-\$250/day; Cultural allowance-\$150 per participant; Per diem-standard government rates; Evaluation costs- 3% of the cooperative agreement. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share

any rates that exceed these amounts.

Please note that the U.S. Embassy (or funding from them) will cover recruitment and selection costs, orientation expenses for participants, and waive the J-1 visa fees. Exchange participants will be enrolled in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) to provide them with health benefits during the exchange. This cost does not need to be included in the budget. More information on ASPE is available at <http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com>.

Please refer to the PSI for allowable costs and complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Letters of commitment. Include pledges to participate in the program's implementation from significant partner organizations, including those in the partner country and any receiving a sub-award.

Resumes of all program staff should be included in the submission. No one resume should exceed two pages.

Attachments/appendices (please limit to those materials essential for understanding the proposed program such as a draft schedule, application forms, or evaluation questionnaires).

First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

First time applicant organizations and organizations which have not received an assistance award (grant or cooperative agreement) from the Bureau during the past three (3) years, must submit as an attachment to this form the following: (a) one copy of their Charter OR Articles of Incorporation; (b) a list of the current Board of Directors; and (c) current financial statements. Note: The Bureau retains the right to ask for additional documentation of those items included on this form.

Please note: Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

As part of final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov

website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The RFGP indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information on the program or the proposal submission, contact the Youth Programs Division program officer Jennifer Phillips, Telephone: (202) 632-9352; Fax: (202) 632-9355; e-mail address: PhillipsJA@state.gov.